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REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The Amendments

Claims 1-66 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 67-73 are pending. Claims 67, 68, 70 and 71 are amended. The amendments find basis at page 23, line 29 to page 30, line 29, specifically at page 25, lines 11-14 and page 27, lines 10-23.

Claims 74-89 are added. The new claims find basis at page 23, line 29 to page 30, line 29, specifically at page 28 lines 12-29 and page 29 lines 22-34. No new matter is added.

Restriction

It is submitted that the subject matter of claims 67-73 is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of a single independent claim would necessarily encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the search and examination of the entire application could be performed without serious burden. MPEP §803 clearly states that "If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions." (emphasis added). It is respectfully submitted that this policy should apply in the present application in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to Applicants in duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Furthermore, claims 70 and 71 are amended to refer to claim 67; thus all the claims are unified with reference to claim 67.

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New claims 74-89 depend ultimately on claim 70 or 71 and belong to Group III as provisionally elected. The Examiner is requested to examine claims 74-89 together with the pending claims.

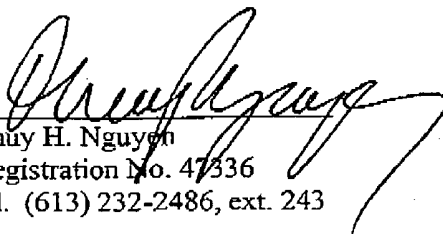
Concluding Remarks

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and favorable action on all pending claims are respectfully requested. If any questions or issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below so that a prompt disposition of this application can be achieved.

If a fee is required for an extension of time which is not accounted for, such an extension is requested and the U.S.P.T.O. is authorized to withdraw from our Deposit Account Number 19-2550 any fee required.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 26, 2004
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